

The
Alcester Grammar



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School Record

March, 1939

Alcester Grammar School Record.

No. 62.

MARCH, 1939.

EDITOR—MR. V. V. DRULLER.

COMMITTEE—

P. HORSEMAN, A. JENKINS, M. AUSTIN, HUNT

Editorial.

Without doubt nothing this term has claimed our attention so much as the work of the builders. For, after several postponements and long delays, plans for improvement to the school buildings were approved, though in a much modified form. The alterations sanctioned consisted of the extension of the boys' very inadequate cloakroom and the replacement of the army huts by a new block of classrooms.

The first signs of the alterations (apart from the frequent visits of architects, etc.) were to be seen about the middle of December, when men arrived to take down one of the huts. And while they worked we were warned to keep clear of the hut, which had become a dangerous building. Then, during the last week of term—and long before the hut had been taken to pieces—the Alcester Builders appeared and took control in the boys' playground. A rapid change took place. Lorries and cars rolled in and out. Piles of debris accumulated as the old buildings came down, and the asphalt was torn up. Trenches for foundations were dug, and finally the playground was filled with all the paraphernalia that one is wont to associate with building operations.

During the five weeks' holiday the work went steadily on. Walls rose from the foundations and grew; window frames were put in; roofs were put on; and on our return we were able to see something more than the shell of the new cloak room and lavatories. It is true that there were no floors, hardly a door, and very few fittings. But in the first two weeks of term, most of these deficiencies were remedied. Our ears were assailed by constant hammerings and bangings, our noses by sundry and penetrating odours. Floors appeared with mottled surfaces, doors began to keep out the cold winds, and now we are waiting for little else than the cloakroom fittings.

The builders, however, have been occupied by no means only at the boys' end of the school. In the holidays a hole was made in the wall at the extreme end of the corridor and a door inserted to communicate with the covered way which is to lead to the new classrooms. Since term began, the wall dividing the two fields has been taken down, brick by brick. The second hut has been demolished and cleared away from its old site. Foundations for the new block have been excavated. Building materials have poured in over a track of sleepers and rubble, through a gap in the hedge behind the history and geography rooms. At the time of writing, the new walls are rapidly rising, so that we are able to form some impression of the extent of the new block, even if not of its appearance.

Meanwhile, school work is being carried on under great difficulties. Some classes are in rooms which are much too small for them ; the Art Room has had to be used as a classroom ; while one form has no room at all and is continually on the move. Woodwork classes have to be taken at the centre in the Priory. Everyone is eagerly looking forward to the time when the building operations are completed and when we can take possession of our new rooms.

* * * *

We should like once again to appeal to Old Scholars who receive their magazines by post to make an effort to settle promptly for these magazines. Postage is not charged, and, when a letter of reminder has to be sent under a three halfpenny stamp, a loss is incurred on that magazine. We feel sure that, when subscribers realise this, our appeal will not fall on deaf ears. Thank you !

School Register.

VALETE

Green, L. N. (Upp. V), 1928-38 Higley, J.A. (Upp. IVb), 1935-38
 *Simmons, E.M. (Upp. V), 1930-38 Kessey, E. J. (Low.IV), 1937-38
 Green, W. E. (Low V), 1931-38 Seale, P. M. (iii), 1938
 Smith, P. J. (Low V), 1935-38

*Prefect

SALVETE.

Budden, M. (Rem.)

Cassell, E. J. (Rem.)

Old Scholars' Guild News.

PRESIDENT—Mr. C. T. L. Caton.

The annual Winter Reunion was held at school on Saturday, December 17, the programme commencing at 7.30 p.m. The arranged programme consisted of games and dancing to music supplied by a radiogram, while provision was made for table tennis, darts and cards. During the supper interval, the business meeting was conducted, and the usual appeal was launched for due and overdue subscriptions. The dancing and games were continued until midnight when, after the distribution by Mr. Caton of prizes from the Christmas Tree, "Auld Lang Syne" and "God Save the King" brought yet another Reunion to an end. The attendance was between eighty and ninety, and the committee had seen to the seasonable decoration of the hall and the dining room with holly, evergreens and streamers.

During the afternoon of the same day a football match took place between Old Scholars and School. The Old Scholars were represented by L. Baylis, R. C. Baylis (captain), D. Baylis, W. Hughes, E. Chattaway, F. Duxbury, R. Biddle, P. Wheeler, A. Avery, H. Hewlett, A. Baylis, and won by seven goals to three.

On Friday, December 30, an Old Scholars' dance was held in the Town Hall and was a social and financial success. A profit of nearly £2 was made. Music was played by Doug Alcock and his Band.

The committee wish to call the attention of Guild members to the fact that this year, 1939, marks the twenty-first anniversary of the formation of the guild. It is hoped that members, past and present, will co-operate with the committee in making the Summer Reunion a Happy Birthday and an Old Scholars' Reunion in the true sense of the word.

Congratulations to the Rev. A. J. Partridge (scholar 1919-27) on his preferment to the living of All Saints, Coventry. He has also been granted a commission in the Royal Army Chaplain's Department (T.A.).

Births.

On November 25, to Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Smart (nee Elsie Brookes)—a son.

On December 14, to Mr. and Mrs. P. Finnemore (nee Mary Bullock)—a son.

On January 1, to Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Steele (nee Maggie Goulbourne)—a son.

On January 5, to Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Mander—a son.

On January 30, to Mr. and Mrs. E. Bunting—a son.

On February 19, to Mr. and Mrs. G. Dowdeswell—a son.

Marriages.

On October 15, at Wimbledon, Greville Wellesley Spencer (scholar 1916-22) to Pamela Joan Smedley.

On December 26, at Studley, Ernest Geoffrey Sheppard (scholar 1924-30) to Iris Muriel Danks.

On January 28, at Alcester, George Douglas Horton (scholar 1926-31) to Dorothy Skinner.

Sons of Soil.

Once upon a time there lived an observant little lad. He was in Lower Fifth, and in many ways a veritable infant prodigy, and he lived at peace with the world, or that part of it, at least, with which he never had any dealings. One night, while the little lad was taking a little refreshment in a farm house somewhere between here and John-o'-Groats, he suddenly made a truly astounding statement. The fact that the hour was late and the night was dark, and farmhouse cider is never conducive to clear thinking, may or may not have had something to do with his suddenly remarking: "The only forms in this school who never do any work are Form I and the Science Sixth." As our bright young friend was by now in a state of sheer obstinacy, I did not argue the point very forcibly, but I now wish to restore the honour and glory to those perspiring brows of the Three Musketeers of the Sixth.

Our friend's brilliant conjecture is ostensibly based on the popular conviction that Sixth Form life is a sort of Paradise for those good souls who have crossed the river of death of the School Certificate, and are now in the green pastures of stinks and free periods which recur with unfailing regularity. Learn ere it is too late, young friend, that Sixth Form life is not all beer and skittles. Our friend is also under the impression that the Sixth Form do no home work. To which idea we reply, in the words of the poet, "Gercha!" Remember, my friend, that when the Science Sixth does a French prose, it does all of a French prose, and not as a great part of the Lower Fifth, the first six lines. We know that when the work is gone through in class you may, by looking hopefully at the teacher, be asked to do a piece out of the first six lines, or you may manage to stumble through a short sentence unseen, or you may not be asked at all. Not so the Sixth, for we hand in our proses in a small green book, and each is then disguised by a large quantity of red ink and handed back with a caustic comment.

As for English Essay, what a delightful task for the Lower Fifth. Prepare it at home for Tuesday, and write it out in class, and it need not exceed three pages. Who could not scribble half a dozen words on a piece of paper in dinner hour on Tuesday and call it a plan for an essay? The Sixth have to write at home for Tuesday an essay of not less than six pages on such inspiring subjects as "Should bicycles carry rear lamps?" One of the three noble musketeers stated that he repeated himself so often that it was like the good old days in Lower Fourth, writing lines for prefects.

And now, young friend, now, I will reveal to you the last heroic achievement of the Science Sixth, compared with which the labours of Hercules are as nought. They have read, or nearly so, that Grande Olde English Legende, "The Mayor of Casteroil." The Legende is as follows:

Nebucan-Henchard did not refuse
To sell his wife for a pair of shoes.

As a punishment from heaven for having got rid of his earthly troubles so easily, he was made to eat grass, and consequently became a prominent hay trusser, corn factor, and later Mayor of Casteroil. Seeing his fortunes have again risen, heaven sends him another punishment in the form of bad crops, but a young Scotsman comes along and puts this right. Heaven now adds to the burden of Nebucan-Henchard's misfortunes by sending his wife back to him, but she dies, leaving him still unbeaten. Here the tale gets rather involved, with the addition of a Jersey lady and some remains, including a genuine skeleton, a daughter

of Nebucan-Henchard, who is not his daughter at all, and some rather shady business in the corn trade. Henchard eventually pines away, leaving a will which expresses a desire that no man shall remember him. Acting upon this, a certain prosy gentleman called Thomas Hardy wrote a novel of some four hundred pages, immortalising Nebucan-Henchard, and, if plodding through that is not hard work, then we should like to hear what is.

In order to confirm our statements regarding the hard-working Science Sixth, we have recently consulted the Grand Panjandrum of Sixth Form Life, the Bey himself. In response to our anxious query, this grand old landmark threw back his lengthy tresses, sneezed seven times, and said with mournful solemnity, "We are but tons of soil; What is time but a swinging brick? Let us drink tea while the sun shines, for tomorrow is another day. Who knows what the future holds for us except another good old slating?"

With that he signified the interview to be at an end, and strolled away, chewing his tongue, and chuntering quietly under his breath.

W. G. H.

Laissez Faire.

"Why does everyone pick on me to weed the garden?" I said furiously. "Well dear, you always do it so nicely," said mother tactfully. Having no answer for this, I retired, somewhat mollified, from the fray. The trouble is, you see, if there is any odd job of work to do, the family always choose me to do it. "Leave it to Mary," they say. "She won't mind." This time, the trouble was over a large patch of weeds at the top of the garden. No other member of the family having the courage to attempt such a hefty piece of work, they had adopted their usual attitude of *laissez faire*.

I went to find my gardening shoes from the 'junk-shed', and after much diligent searching and, incidentally, tipping an open can of paint over father's precious bulbs, I managed to find my shoes. I started weeding and, as I worked, thought of several excuses I could offer my parent for the spoiling of his bulbs. "After all," I argued with an imaginary irate father, "how was I to know the paint was there and that it would tip over?" I continued in this strain until my brother came out to see how I was getting on. He, disregarding my black looks, proceeded to give me advice on the technique needed for pulling up weeds. I asked him bitterly for a practical demonstration, but he suddenly remembered an urgent appointment and dashed off in a tremendous hurry.

The next interruption came about a quarter of an hour later ; this time, it came from one of mother's friends. " I do like to see little girls being so helpful," she said, and then, " How tidy the garden is ! I suppose your brother does most of the gardening ?" I uttered a strangled sound that might have meant anything, and mentally put a black mark against the lady's name.

I had barely settled down to work again when the neighbour's red setter charged into me with a force that knocked me off my feet and into a gooseberry bush : I got out of this filled with most unchristianlike anger against all dumb animals, especially dogs. However, the worst was yet to come : my Sealyham terrier came running out of the house, sighted the red setter and bounded forward in joyful anticipation of a scrap. At the same moment the red setter sighted my dog, and then the trouble began. The din the two dogs made must have roused the whole neighbourhood from its Saturday afternoon calm. I dashed forward in an endeavour to separate the two animals. Needless to say, I was bitten and so retired discreetly to the background and made hissing noises to attract the fighters' attention. Fortunately, at this moment a black cat crossed the garden and the combatants sighting her, forgot their differences and chased her off happily.

Feeling highly overwrought, I went into the house and fortified my nerves with a strong glass of lemonade. When my brother returned, he found me seated in an armchair, and reading a book. " I say, have you finished that weeding ?" was his greeting. With feelings too deep for words I got up and walked out.

MARY AUSTIN (Lower V)

The Vampire.

When staying in Germany in a little village called Annerg, I was interested in the village gossip. They said there was a vampire in the district believed to do its awful work near Ziska Castle. I took this, of course, with a pinch of salt, but nevertheless I was interested. By a stroke of luck I had an invitation to Count Ziska's Castle ; here was my chance to ask him about the vampire. I was received by the Count himself and then I noticed something very queer about him : he had hairs on the palms of his hands and his teeth were very white and pointed like wolf's fangs, while his lips were very red. I dismissed these things from my mind and hoped that I should enjoy my stay.

One night I was in my room when I happened to look out of the window and saw a gigantic bat with the Count's head ! I drew back horrified and instinctively touched the crucifix round my neck. Instantly the horrible thing flew away.

I felt sick with fear, and I'm afraid I fainted.

The next morning the Count was very affable, and I noticed his lips were redder than ever, but I was surprised to find no servants. The day passed quite well and I retired at 11.30 p.m. That night I had a horrible dream: the vampire was biting my throat. I wanted to scream but could not; all at once I had a sensation of falling through space. I heard a voice: it was that of my landlady. "What's the matter, mein herr? you've been restless all night." I was relieved to find it had all been just an awful nightmare.

SINGLETON (Upper IVa)

The Lord Chancellor's Cat.

A long time ago there lived a Lord Chancellor who was tall, slim and very upright. He always used to carry a small bag of dog biscuits with him when he went out for a walk, so that he could give one to any dog he met. He was fond of other animals; in fact he owned a black cat himself, but he always kept it in the house.

One day his cat was missing; he started to look for it, but he could not find it. Soon all the household were looking for the lost cat, but it could not be found anywhere. That night the Lord Chancellor went to bed feeling very upset. He tossed and rolled trying to get to sleep. At last he fell asleep, but he had the most awful dream. He dreamt that he saw his cat walking about the house with its head cut off and stuck on its tail, and to his amazement the cat began to talk. It said, "I am tired of staying in the house all day and being petted like a lamb. I wish I could live out of doors in the fresh air like other cats." Then he woke up and found that he had overslept.

He dressed and went downstairs, and what should he see sitting in front of the fire but his old black cat washing itself. After that dream he let her go outside as much as she liked.

N. NASH (iii)

On Spring.

Spring is in the air; I can sense it in the bright twittering of the birds and the peeping out of the first primrose in the woods. Spring seems such a fresh season—it is the beginning of everything. Why, even the school buildings are looking more like classrooms instead of air raid shelters. New joys and new troubles are awaiting us, borne along with the forerunner of summer.

As I sit at my desk and look out of the window into the bright sunshine, a little demon arises in me—he has not been suppressed even through nine Springs—and I feel like flying out through the open window and roaming the fresh green fields, where the trees are just shooting out their green buds to greet Spring, and where the fresh breeze makes the tiny, fleecy clouds scud across the sky; instead of this I have to roam the streets of Troy in Virgil's "Aeneid," or wade through a list of French verbs.

When I come to school on a Monday morning I see dark tunics, and the faces to which they belong looking nearly as glum—really, why do we have to have this Monday morning feeling? I think that there ought to be a revolution in school uniforms; bright clothes are such a help—to the girls, anyway! I do not mean that we should come to school looking more fit for walking along Bond Street than doing geometrical problems, but it certainly would make us brighter if we brought a little of Spring into the classroom.

It is a joy to go to town now and watch the new fashions on the passers-by; a little bit of felt with a feather stuck in it makes a daring hat, and costumes are looking more and more like harlequins' suits. No longer need the housewife look into her wardrobe and sigh, for, if she is nimble with her needle, any little scraps of material can be made to look like the latest model from Paris. The flower vendors are bringing lilac, snowdrops and violets to town, and the daffodils brighten the cold pavements with a warm dash of Spring moods:

"Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

As I have said, there also come troubles with Spring; thoughts of the coming School Certificate Examination, or of Sports Day and a ball of wool and some knitting needles that have been lying idle. But then there are always hopes and joyous expectations to counteract these bogeys; round fat Easter eggs (I am one of the many who still enjoy this childish pleasure), tennis, and swimming.

Alas! Spring is over too soon, and, like the daffodils we fade away; we cannot keep those fresh spirits that we had at the beginning of the year. By the time that winter is over we feel at our lowest ebb; what a hope of things to come is the first snowdrop, or the call of the cuckoo in the woods. Oh, Spring, thou art a giver of new life to the weary!

J. MACHIN



Lord of the Jungle.

W. S. Devey (Low V).

A Rummage Sale.*(WITH APOLOGIES TO WORDSWORTH)*

I wandered lonely as a cloud
 That floats on high o'er hill and vale;
 When all at once I saw a crowd
 Of ladies at a rummage sale.
 Around the stalls, beneath the trees
 Buzzing about like busy bees.

Continually their eyes do shine;
 As eagerly they seize their prey,
 And with their war-cry "This is mine!"
 Walk quickly on—forget to pay.
 And then to tea behind the manse
 Under the vicar's kindly glance.

The maids beside them pranced; but they
 Could scarce provide sufficient tea.
 These guests had fasted all the day,
 To get a meal when it was free.
 They gorged and gorged without a thought
 And sampled cakes of every sort.

Now oft, when on my couch I lie
 And think of that wild seething mob,
 I wonder who had luck to buy
 My second-best sports coat for a bob.
 Then rage within my heart prevails,
 When I think of these rummage sales.

DOROTHY SAVAGE.

The Huts.

In the years immediately following the end of the European war, the number of pupils in the school rose rapidly. The accommodation of the existing buildings became severely taxed and, additional class rooms being absolutely necessary, it was in the end decided to erect temporary buildings. Part of this temporary accommodation took the shape of two army huts.

The pages of the *Record* supply us with but little information about the advent of the huts, the spirit in which they were welcomed, or the uses to which they were at once put. In No. 10 (December 1920) we read: "Is it possible that at last the new huts have arrived? At present their appearance is by no means reassuring as to their fitness for habitation. How long before they are so?" Then in No. 11 (March 1921) it is stated: "At last two of the new class rooms are fit for habitation, and IIIB and IIIA have taken possession." This, of course, refers to the hut last

Notes and News.

Term began on Wednesday, January 25, ends on Wednesday, April 5.

A lecture on behalf of the R.S.P.C.A. was given on Friday, December 2, by Captain Canon.

At the end of last term, football colours were presented to Midlane i, Green i, Robinson, Smith i and Heard.

Robinson has been elected captain of the Jackals.

Two carol concerts were held on Thursday, December 15.

Miss E. K. Jones, who has been a member of the Staff since 1919, retired at the end of the autumn term. Present and past scholars and the Staff all join in wishing her health and happiness in her retirement. Miss Jones has already taken up work at the Bristol University Settlement.

We welcome Miss E. M. Phillips who joined the Staff at the beginning of the present term.

When school opened on January 25 with a heavy snowfall, conditions both in school and on the roads were very bad. A gale rendered the history and geography rooms uninhabitable, and several roads in the neighbourhood were flooded. It was consequently decided that school should be closed on Friday.

A lecture on Life-Saving was given to the boys on Friday, February 17, by Captain Daintry.

Half term was Monday, February 27.

Whitehouse and Midlane i have been appointed prefects.

Speech Day has been arranged for Tuesday, March 21, when the address will be given by T. Bodkin, Esq., M.A., D.Litt., M.R.I.A., (Barber Professor of Fine Arts in Birmingham University).

A picture "All Things Bright and Beautiful" by Margaret Tarrant, has been presented to Forms ii and i by Miss E. K. Jones.

occupied by Forms III and Lower IV. Form IIIA had previously been housed in the present Physics Laboratory, which then became for a period the Woodwork Classroom. When the second hut was erected, shortly afterwards, one of its rooms was for some years used as a form room, and the other was assigned to woodwork.

The erection of the new huts at once eased the pressure on the main buildings, but never for one moment were they regarded as an ideal solution of our difficulties. Rather did we put up with them as with a temporary expedient. From term to term it was expected that they would be removed, and their place taken by buildings more suitable for school class rooms. But hope was again and again deferred, and we were forced to regard them as fixtures and not to anticipate any immediate improvement.

As one looks back over the eighteen years during which they stood, one cannot but think of the perpetual discomfort to which those who lived and worked in them were subjected. The rabbits, it must be granted, soon established a secure and flourishing colony beneath them. But what of the human beings inside? At first, merely a thin partition divided the two rooms in each hut, and every word spoken in one room was clearly audible in the other—an inconvenience subsequently overcome by the erection of second partitions, which provided space later used for games cupboards. Each term brought its trials. In winter the morning temperature was often so low that the mercury in the thermometers refused to emerge from the bulbs. The ink in the inkwells was frozen, and when the stoves had been stoked and roared to a red glow, we were from time to time distracted by a succession of pops, as the thawing ink split the inkwells. In summer, the other extreme of temperature was experienced, and the mercury during the afternoon frequently mounted into the nineties, with the atmosphere still and oppressive. The opening of the doors at the end of the huts served to give only a slight relief. In spring, our feathered friends looked with favour on the shelter of the eaves, and many a brood has vied successfully for a hearing with staff and pupils.

One long, unsolved problem was the heating of the huts. Various types of stove were installed and experimented with. Some refused to stand up to the heat required and flung their fronts and contents bodily on to the floor. Some gave a merely local heat, roasting the unfortunate ones in their immediate vicinity, while permitting the no less unfortunate ones at a distance from them to shiver with cold. Still others made the atmosphere so dry and unpleasant that one preferred to be cold rather than stifled.

To this list of discomforts a host of others might be added. Draughts through windows, doors and latterly through floors were a source of unending complaint. The wooden floors proved increasingly noisy under the boots of all who used them, and anyone moving about could feel the whole fabric shake and tremble beneath his tread. No artificial lighting was permitted; in consequence, the latter part of the afternoon on dull days was often passed in a deep gloom. Rain, too, brought its contribution of annoyances, for, beyond the fact that drips found their way through the roofs on to desks and their occupiers, in heavy showers the cannonade on the roofs drowned every other sound, and not seldom caused the suspension of all classroom activities.

Then one day in the local press appeared the advertisement—

“FOR SALE, 2 Army Huts in good condition, at present in use as classrooms at Alcester Grammar School; size approximately 60ft. by 20ft.” etc., etc.

and we realised that the huts were to go. This realisation, however, we feel sure, caused no one a single pang of regret; and, when they had been cleared of all their furniture and workmen shortly afterwards arrived to remove them, our chief feeling was one of pleasure that these unsightly structures would soon no longer be ours. But they, for their part, did not seem very eager to leave us; they resisted to the utmost the efforts of the workmen to take them to pieces. One load, indeed, so weighed down the lorry that was to take it away that the lorry sank into the turf and could not be moved for several weeks.

Gradually, nevertheless, all traces of these black buildings are being removed, and soon, we anticipate, they will be nothing more to A.G.S. than a memory.

The First two Lessons.

I arrived at school the other morning at about six minutes past nine, to find the place deserted and unpleasantly quiet. I went into the cloakroom to find a prefect strolling round, hands in pockets. I disrobed me of mac., cap, gloves and satchel, and made my way to wait outside the hall door. On arrival, I whispered “good-morning” to B——, who was already waiting there. My well-wishing undertone went all the way down the corridor and out at the girls’ exit. Inside the hall I heard a slight disturbance and a second later a deafening roar of two hundred and nine people clapping. A moment later the door clattered open, and a multitude of boys stamped out. We joined the throng, got

our satchels, and went over to the hut. I could hear a babble of excited voices : " What do you think of that, Jim ? " " Good for him ; " and close at hand the critic's growl of disapproval. At last we reached our destined abode.

Maths. first lesson. Out tumbled the Algebra books, and, amid whispers, and now and then a girl's stifled titter, we awaited the arrival of the maths. master. Somebody suddenly went up to the desk and waited in silence, deep in meditation. In came the maths. master and up spoke the wretched victim : " Please sir, I hav'nt———" " Go and sit down ; " (to the class) : " Get your homework ready." I opened my book with a light heart. Then I stared in horror at a blank, clean page with ' homework ' written at the top. Not done ! Horrors, what should I do ? Meek and trembling, I stuck up my hand. " Yes ? " " Please sir, I think I have forgotten my prep." " Twice tonight " . . . I slumped into my seat hardly daring to think that I was still alive and safe. Every sum I did that morning was wrong. In agony I waited for the bell to ring. Every minute seemed an hour. At last, I heard the merry, relieving clang.

Latin it was now. I opened my desk and looked for my book. It was not on the top. " Underneath, probably," thought I. In consequence, out flew the first layer. Not there either. I rummaged the whole way through. When I emerged from my fruitless quest, my hair was on end, and I was surrounded by ' Prester John,' ' This Modern Age,' etc. I piled these up into the desk and crammed down the lid. I knew too well that the worst was yet to come. A ragged fellow it was who awaited the blow of punishment. But I waited in vain. A prefect strolled in, hands in pockets. He announced that we were to get on with our prep. I went back to my place without a word. The bell rang : a second time that morning, the last in my narrative.

D. SPENCER (Upper IVA)

Father Time.

At the end of the Christmas term I spent a considerable amount of time collecting books and notebooks to take home for work during the Christmas holidays. I told myself that if I spent my five weeks' holiday wisely and well, I might yet have a chance of passing that examination in July.

On the first day of the holidays, I did no school-work, but revelled in the glorious sense of freedom. In an ill-fated moment, however, I decided to keep a diary during my holidays, and record therein my daily labours. I now present extracts from

it, partly as apology, and partly as excuse, to those who ask me how I spend my time during the holidays, and whether I do any work.

Thursday, December 22—Decide to get to work in earnest to-day, and make early start. Am dismayed at amount of books to be read; lay them out in four piles and look at them. Not a very pleasant prospect. Look out of the window, and see dog triumphantly dragging someone's coat round the lawn, so dash out and retrieve it. Return after exhilarating chase, and select one of less difficult books, then discover that allotted time for study is up. Promise to make up for lost time by hard day's work tomorrow.

Friday, December 23—Commotion. "Alarums and excursions," as Shakespeare says. Whole household in throes of preparations for Christmas. Rooms being turned out and furniture moved about to accommodate expected visitors. Abandon all hope of any studying.

Wednesday, December 28—Have by now more or less recovered from Christmas festivities, and realise with horror that one week of the five has already gone, and the four piles of books are still there, as large as life. Feverishly seize pen and work for three hours. Panic somewhat abated after that.

Friday, December 30—Looking forward to quiet week-end with plenty of opportunity for reading. Alas! House filled with relations, arrived for week-end, within six hours.

Tuesday, January 3—Relations gone—also the second week of my holiday. However, am determined to start New Year off in cheerful and industrious mood. Hopefully settle down to a week's work.

Tuesday, January 10—Have done quite a respectable amount of work during past week. Facing another week's work, and at last am being left alone to get on with it. Did I hear someone whisper the word "boredom?"

Thursday, January 12—Away with care! Am prepared to enjoy myself this week-end. Heartily sick of sitting over dusty books all day. Anyway, holidays only half over, "gather ye rosebuds . . ." etc., plenty of time to finish work yet. Resolve to start again on Monday, after good rest.

Monday, January 16—Have decided to work hard in mornings, and then to relax for rest of day. Congratulate self on sensible decision, and start work at once. Half an hour later friend arrives, and brazenly announces that she has come to stay for few days,

remarking that, with five weeks' holiday, I must be getting bored with nothing to do. Point out that nearly four weeks of holiday already gone.

Friday, January 18—Put in a considerable amount of overtime. However, four piles of books apparently not greatly depleted. Gallantly make last effort over week-end to finish essay; that done, decide that it is not worth while starting anything else.

Monday, January 23—Only two days' holiday left. Determined to enjoy self before "return to slavery" (am secretly looking forward to Wednesday, though would not admit it for worlds). Drag satchel out of dark corner, shake dust out, and fill with books. However, there are still about eight left which will have to be carried.

Wednesday, January 25—While getting up, (what an unearthly hour!) dazedly wonder what has happened to the five weeks' holiday I once had. Have not done nearly all the work I intended to do. Resolve philosophically to work extra hard during the coming term. Have to run for 'bus; when at last arrive at School discover that I have left report-book at home.

P. R. H.

A Miser.

Grim and forbidding in the darkening twilight, sat the miser, crouching over the scanty fire. With shifty, beady eyes he peered round the bare room to the place where his money bags were secreted. How he had hoarded up that gold, week by week, year by year, till now, here he was, as the dying embers revealed him, a gnarled old man, shrivelled with greed and age, whose only joy was to sit and gloat over his money, and to count every shining piece again and again.

Almost £10,000 he had now; that represented all the things he had done without, all the comforts and pleasures he had forsaken, all the things that other men enjoyed. And now he found himself a very old man, living a very lonely life in a very dilapidated country mansion.

But he had his gold.

"His gold, his gold," and he walked with tottering footsteps across the room, and lifted a loose floor-board, and revealed the hoard he had so often visited: he stooped and ran his wrinkled fingers through the cold pieces of metal—his sovereigns . . . the wind rattled the shutters . . . a wisp of ivy tapped the window-pane . . .

K. WILSON (Lower IV)

In the Dustbin.

Once in a dustbin there lived a very fat medicine bottle ; he was dark green in colour, and had a bristling moustache. None of the other bottles liked him, simply because he was so proud of himself. There were many other bottles in the dustbin, some of them like Colonel Fizz (that is what we will call the bottle), but none of them as proud as the Colonel.

Life was very dull in the dustbin and the bottles were quite ill for want of a change !

One morning a strange bottle came in and joined them. " I'll soon make you happy !" he said. The stranger had been a bottle containing Hall's Wine and he told all the others that they needed a tonic. " I'll teach you to sing," he said. The bottles thought this a good idea, and the wine bottle decided that it would be nice to have a singing contest.

Colonel Fizz tried to drown the others' hopes when he read about the contest. " You haven't an earthly, my dear fellows !" he told them proudly.

The syphon had entered for the contest, but his memory was so bad that he had to read the words and, finally he sang so feelingly, that he squirted water all over the bottles and spoiled his chance. The ink bottle was next on the list. He sang a negro song, but the little bottle's voice was not strong enough, for in trying a high note he cracked himself. Colonel Fizz was the sensation of the afternoon. He sang his song so loudly that he blew his cork out. The effort left him so weak that he was unable to finish. How the other bottles laughed.

The scent bottle sang a very pretty song in such a sweet voice that the bottles agreed with the wine bottle when he gave her the prize.

E. ROSE (III)

The Storm.

A sullen and heavy stillness hangs over the countryside ; no breeze fans the leaves; nothing stirs to relieve the leaden atmosphere. What little light there is seems to be coming through a film of yellow mud and the sky is overcast with black and threatening clouds. A bird flies swiftly past to join his fellows, who huddle in silence in some kindly sheltering bush or tree.

The heat is overpowering ; everyone sits with an air of expectancy in his attitude, waiting for the relief from this sultry and overwhelming atmosphere. The cows languidly swish their tails to keep away the persistent gnats and flies which seem untiring in their efforts to annoy the unfortunate animals.

Intermittently a hash of lightning breaks the blackness of the distant clouds. One! . . . Two! . . . Three! . . . Four! . . . Five! miles away. It gets gradually nearer. Suddenly, with a dazzling flash and an ominous roar, the storm breaks. Hail beats against the window panes with the fury of a savage animal and looking—as my small brother remarked—like ‘lots and lots of sago.’

As Thor beats his mighty drums his whole fury expends itself in tremendous crashes which seem to make even the foundations tremble; the lightning incessantly illuminates the sky; the hail forms an almost impenetrable screen as it rebounds from the ground like the spray of a high sea breaking on the rocks. The cattle herd together in the most sheltered spot and turn their backs on the storm; the turbulent river rushes along its course, swelled by the rain; here and there a branch of a tree is torn off and the most insecure and delicate plants are washed from their bed, or possibly a field of wheat nearly ruined.

But now Thor relents a little and the storm abates. The rain is falling almost gently and the thunder and lightning are getting fainter. Finally it ceases completely. At last the air is fresh and sweet and it is blessedly cool again. The birds begin to sing and the sun breaks through. The tranquillity that belongs to the country is restored and only a fallen tree or a spoilt crop remains to tell us that the storm has taken its toll.

J. M. HILL (Lower V)

“English Schools are Very Strict.”

SAYS R. GLOVER.

The American from Alcester, not “The Yank at Oxford,” has settled down at Sequoia High School, California. Here is an extract from the “Sequoia Times,” and it gives quite clearly the impression that R. J. Glover took back to America, of the English system of Education.

“Nothing is the same here in Sequoia as in English schools. This is a regular vacation compared to English education, where one goes through six forms, as compared to the twelve grades here. One goes two years in one form, which equals two of our grades. There is usually from one to one-and-a-half hours of home-work nightly; and students are not allowed to choose their subjects, but programs are already made out for them. ‘Masters’ teach over there, not teachers,” he continued. “If one wishes to ask a question it is ‘Please, sir, may I?’ and ‘No, sir,’ and ‘Yes, sir.’”

According to Richard, "comparatively no co-education is employed, as the schools are just becoming a little modern." (Note, Alcestrians!). The boys wear dark coats and grey flannels with special school ties, while girls' uniforms are much like the Salvation Army uniforms or the uniforms of the Catholic convents. Make-up of any kind or nail-polish is forbidden.

"The average person in the lower fifth form," he continued, "or equivalent to our freshmen year, might take algebra, geometry, history, English, French, Latin, chemistry, electrical and mechanical science, games and gym. Of course these alternate; as one takes chemistry twice a week; electrical and mechanical service once a week; games, or when practices for inter-school games, once a week. Everything else is taken every day."

"The sports mostly played over there are cricket, soccer, or English football, and Rugby football, or American football. They play football in suits much like our basket ball uniforms. Tennis, basket ball and hockey are girls' games.

"The sixth-form boys are very superior," continued Richard, "and wouldn't think of fighting or squabbling among their class mates. They talk a lot of politics and events of the day.

"I had a lot of fun over there and everyone was so nice and friendly," he concluded.

This description interested me so much that I thought it would be a good idea to let you all read it. Some of Glover's ideas seem to be rather inaccurate, for instance, I was rather surprised to learn that we were just becoming modern. Perhaps we are, at least, from the American point of view, for practically the last words that Glover said were, "Say, you don't live over here, you just exist."

J. R. W. W.

Gypsy Girl.

I saw you first, one evening as I wended my way homeward through the woods, past the gypsy encampment. You looked beautiful even in your ragged dress. The light from the camp fire fell on your jet black hair in which poppies were entwined. Your eyes sparkled and your cheeks reddened as you began to rattle your castanets to the strain of gypsy violins. You commenced to dance, springing higher and higher, until you seemed to be dancing on air.

Behind you lay caravans against a background of russet autumn leaves. On the caravan steps stood glistening copper-banded buckets and urns reflecting the beams of light of the glowing embers. Old men sat smoking placidly at their long, clay pipes, and the gold ear-rings of an old gypsy woman gleamed and glittered as she moved.

You were singing, singing an haunting gypsy melody, soft and sweet. You concluded your dance with an agile leap. As for me, I crept away as silently as I came. You and your friends have gone away now, but you still remain in my memory, gypsy girl.

J. PLESTERS (Lower IV)

Gardening Thoughts.

My garden shows signs of flourishing well this year. Only this morning I took a walk around the grounds and observed the ripening buds on the hedges, plants and trees bursting with life and I felt quite proud—on the top of the world as you might say. There are some ignorant people who do not regard my efforts—my successful efforts—in the way that I think does justice to me. I quite pity them, they are so misguided.

Tomorrow I will weed the rockery. My crocuses look well on it and the snowdrops the best ever. Then there are the gillies to plant. Oh! of course, I am going to the Women's Institute tomorrow night; perhaps I had better leave the weeding till another day.

In the greenhouse my celery and cauliflower seeds are coming on, considering the difficulties they undergo. For instance, Mrs. Green asked me if I would oblige her by storing her cyclamen in my greenhouse. This favour was quickly followed by Mr. Brown's prize fern root, Miss Parson's palm, Mr. Godwin's camellias, Miss ———. Well anyhow, sufficient is it to say that my greenhouse is full of other people's precious property. And amongst all this my beloved celery seeds struggle gamely against overwhelming odds.

But as all these plants come in, my tools go out. My spade is borrowed, my fork—another reason for leaving the weeding—my wheelbarrow, my lawnmower, my roller and even my flower-pots.

Added to these troubles all the pests in the neighbourhood seem to hold their meeting place in my garden, as well as birds, dogs, cats and so on. The vicar dropped in to tea on Tuesday and remarked on the healthy appearance of my hyacinths. I felt a thrill of pleasure run through me. I must tell that bit to Mrs. Fairbanks my neighbour; it's quite a victory.

My roses last year were quite a treat ; in fact they would have had first prize at a flower show if that blundering ape of a judge had known his job. As it was he did not know a good rose when he saw one.

Now I must go and tie up the daffodils ; the wind last night did not do them much good. What a lovely garden it will be towards the end of spring and the beginning of summer. The apple of my eye will be the talk of the district for a surety.

M. WILLIAMS (Lower V)

A Summer Picture.

How often I sat there ! quite contented to watch the sea-gulls flying overhead. They seemed to me such beautiful birds. The way they glided through the air, smoothly and without any effort, made me feel dreamy and peaceful. I followed them with my eyes, and saw them sink gracefully on to the murmuring sea. They were lazy too, I thought, and just wanted to rest on the waves. Their shrill cries drifted up to me, the only sound on that still, hot August afternoon, apart from the gentle lapping of the sea on the dried golden sands.

I leaned back against a rock, and let my eyes wander away from the sea for a moment. To my left lay the woods, wild and fairy-like, where happy holiday-makers spent their afternoons in the cool shade of the trees. From where I sat I could see even now two small girls climbing over the stile gleefully, to join a group of children of their own age, carrying picnic-hampers, tennis-rackets, balls and other things that suggested a good time. I smiled, it was such a pretty picture. Then I turned my head to the right. I did not meet with such a peaceful scene there, but it was just as happy. I saw a bathing pool, where boys and girls were splashing about, in a vain attempt to swim. Coming down a shute was a laughing, merry-eyed girl, shouting to another girl at the bottom to 'mind-out.' Beyond the pool were music-halls, donkeys, tennis-courts, golf-links and all the things that make you want to jump up and dance.

But I was feeling tired and lazy, so I turned my eyes back once again to the cool, clear blue sea. The gulls were still little specks of white on the wide ocean, and their cries still floated up to me. I felt myself gradually drifting into unconsciousness, the unconsciousness of complete peace.

R. YATES (Upper IVA)

Examination Results.

Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

In the examinations held in December last, all pupils taking the examinations obtained certificates.

Piano: Grade iii (Transitional), * J. H. Bridgman, C. E. Sanders, R. P. Pellman.

Grade iv (Lower), R. H. Arnold, V. J. Hansell.

Grade v (Higher), C. M. Pellman, R. Yates.

Violin: Grade ii (Elementary), C. H. Bryan.

Grade iii (Transitional), D. A. Savage.

* with credit.

Debating Society.

CHAIRMAN—Miss Evans

HON. SECRETARY—Butt.

COMMITTEE—

P. Horseman, Hunt i, Whitehouse, Biddle, Harrison and Butt.

The debate—"The Spirit of Christmas is lacking in Modern Life"—took place at the end of last term and proved a success. As is usual at that time of year everyone was in a humorous frame of mind. Several budding humorists made their appearance, and, the Christmas Spirit taking possession of the house, the motion was decisively defeated.

The subject placed before the house this term was of an artistic nature—"The Cult of the Ugly is the predominant feature of Modern Life." The house obviously had no eyes for beauty; it agreed with the motion. Again the ability of the younger members was evident and it is hoped that in the last debate of this session this improvement will be maintained.

M. W. B.

Scouts.

This term we have lost two patrol leaders, Green i and Smith i, and their places have been taken by Robinson and Webb. We had a visit from Captain Daintry, who gave us a very interesting demonstration on life saving. This was followed by a Practice Class, at which the Scouts showed themselves very apt pupils.

There has not been much activity in the way of tests this term, and I should like to see a greater keenness amongst the younger Scouts to pass their full second class. The seniors must get to

work and stir up their Patrols. I should like to report the whole troop fully second class by the end of the summer term. It can be done. We are looking forward to resuming the swimming during the summer term.

The marks up to the time of writing are as follows :—

Buffaloes 360 ; Owls 358 ; Eagles 344 ; Wolves 343 ; Kingfishers 312 ; Hawks 295 ; Kangaroos 291 ; Peewhites 282 ; Beavers 219 ; Panthers 193.

E. S. WALKER, S.M.

Football.

CAPTAIN—Collins i.

Last term ended with a sporting encounter with the Old Scholars, the result being of only secondary importance. The team, accompanied by Mr. Cook, paid a visit to a First Division league match at the kind invitation of Mr. Tewkesbury, the F.A. coach. An interesting game was seen, and the whole team wondered why the best player of the home team was subsequently transferred. This provided a contrast to school football, which suffers sometimes in another way when promising players leave somewhat prematurely.

This term started later than expected, owing to building operations, and this resulted in the cancellation of the Bromsgrove fixture. Cloakroom difficulties prevented any practice prior to the first match at Evesham, and we were heavily defeated. Conditions improved by the time the team took the field against Redditch, and playing as a team again, and not as individuals, we were rewarded with a decisive victory. We obtained two goals in the opening minutes, but afterwards the Redditch defence put up a stubborn resistance, and the issue was in doubt until late in the second half when the final goal was scored. There was an unfortunate interval before the next match at King's Norton, where we were well and truly beaten, the whole team playing much below form. We were comforted however on the following Saturday, with a smashing victory over Evesham. This was indeed an historic occasion in school football at A.G.S., being the first time for many years that we have defeated Evesham.

The team, in this match, settled down almost immediately, and attack after attack was launched on the Evesham goal with no result. The first goal for Alcester was followed by three more quick ones, and the score at half time stood at 4—0. The team still kept up the pace after half time, when three more goals were added to the score, but the game, when only half way through the second half was stopped for a few minutes by a severe hail storm, which flooded the pitch. On resuming, Evesham scored their only goal, and the game finished under adverse conditions, the final score being 7—1 in favour of Alcester.

A great improvement has been made in the cloakrooms, which are now twice their former size, and which will now allow footballers to change comfortably. Certain of the hardier elements may regret the passing of the shower bath, but the foot-bath is a big improvement and it is no longer necessary to execute weird balancing feats on the wash basins, while cleaning the lower limbs.

RESULTS.

- A.G.S. v. Old Scholars. (home) lost 3—7.
- v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (away) lost 1—9.
- v. Redditch C.H.S. (away) won 3—0.
- v. Kings Norton S.S. (away) lost 1—12.
- v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (home) won 7—1.
- v. Redditch C.H.S. (home) won 3—0.

SIDES MATCHES.

Tomtits 5, Jackals 0; Tomtits 0, Brownies 7; Brownies 6, Jackals 0.

Hockey.

CAPTAIN—D. Horseman.

Although no match has been won yet, the score of the only match played so far, one goal all against Evesham, shows that the team work and general play of the First XI has greatly improved. The forwards work together much better and are quicker in attack; speed in the circle still needs more practice. The defence has considerably improved in marking their opponents and in clearing the ball. J. Holder makes a very reliable goal-keeper and has also mastered the art of kicking clear of the circle. B. Slaughter, a good attacking defence, was unable to play in the match, but F. Evans proved an able substitute. It is hoped that the team will be victorious in their next two matches.

This term it has been decided to introduce a series of hockey tests. The player must pass all her tests and play in three school matches before she receives her hockey colours. This has encouraged much enthusiasm for harder practice, especially among the members of the Lower School who are the first elevens of the future. The school was represented in the match against Evesham by the following :—J. Holder, F. Hawkes, F. Evans, P. Cresswell, K. Pellman, D. Horseman, B. Bryan, G. Miles, M. Nall, M. Winwood, B. Harris.

Two Sides Matches have been played, the results being : Brownies 3, Tomtits 0 ; Jackals 4, Tomtits 0.

For the Juniors.

An Adventure with the Police.

One day I was walking up the street when I met a policeman, and he said, "Have you seen a man with blue eyes wearing a black suit?" I said, "No, I have just come out of the house. But I will look for him." The policeman took me to a corner of the wall. Just as we got to the corner a man with blue eyes came along and I saw he was wearing a black suit. He saw the policeman and he ran down a big hole. The policeman said, "That's the man."

We went after him and he went through a little door which slammed behind him. But there was a window and we looked through it and saw a gang of men. The man was the leader. The policeman knocked the door in, and charged at the man who tried to run out of the room. As he was coming out, I hit him with a piece of iron that I had just picked up. We took him to the police station, and he was sent to prison for five years.

HILLMAN (Remove)

The Wind.

One night I heard the wind, and whistling up through the crack it came, "Whoo-oo-oo," and again "Whoo-oo-oo" and I could not go to sleep. It was about eleven o'clock when I went to sleep.

HAINES (aged 8).

The Mouse.

There was a little mouse
And he lived in a hole
With a very tiny mole.

One day he saw a bee
And he was also very wee
So he said, "Do you like me?"

The bee said, "Yes, of course,"
And flew into the gorse
And killed himself, poor thing.

BRENDA HILL (aged 9)

The Seasons.

SPRING

Spring with all its splendour and joy
To a child is like a new toy.

SUMMER

Summer days will soon be here,
Then will all the children cheer.

WINTER

In the winter there is snow,
Then oft skating we all go.

GITTUS (aged 8)

ALCESTER:
THE CHRONICLE OFFICE,
HIGH STREET.
